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IIGS: Visit Monitor 03 Same as Released Version

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IIGS: "Visit Monitor" 03 Same as Released Version

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TOPIC -----

Is there a difference between the Apple IIGS (ROM 03) I own, and other Apple IIGS systems with ROM version 03? My 03 is one of the first few hundred that were accidentally assembled with "Memory Peeker" and "Visit Monitor" stuck in the Classic Desk Accessories menu.

Anyway, I've documented a list of things that seem to be wrong with my ROM 03 Apple IIGS. Could you try out the things on the list with your ROM 03 (one without "Memory Peeker" and "Visit Monitor" in the CDA menu), and let me know if any of those things happen on your Apple IIGS.

The System Monitor

After entering Monitor with a "CALL-151" command or accessing it through "Visit Monitor/CDA", the system will freeze after entering the "LIST" command. Pressing any key after this causes a continuous scroll of inverse text, while the Error bell rings non-stop. Strangely enough, pressing certain keys will display different graphic modes while this is happening, replacing the scrolling text, but with the error bell still ringing, and no way to stop it.

Applesoft BASIC

When trying to run any program written in Applesoft BASIC that launches GS-specific programs (i.e., doing calls to Apple IIGS ROMs or hardware), the program will not run and gives this error message:

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?SYNTAX ERROR IN 65182
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All programs give the same error message. After this error message occurs

from trying to load an Applesoft BASIC program, the GS/OS operating system won't run. Trying to load any disk that uses GS/OS to boot up will crash after the "Welcome to the Apple IIGS" message appears and gives the following error message:

Error Loading Apple IIGS.OS File. Error=\$002E

After this you must turn the computer off for 30 seconds or more before you can load GS/OS without getting the same error message.

MDIdeas Card

When plugged into my ROM 03 Apple IIGS, the Stereo/Digitizer card from MDIdeas, does not function properly. Any sound that's recorded with the card is played back with an echo, and is noisy and scratchy (incompatible with either card or software). The card and software are not at fault, because they work perfectly on my other Apple IIGS, which is a ROM 01.

Software

Many software applications will not run on my Apple IIGS with the 03 ROMs, while they apparently run on other 03 ROM-d systems. (This includes public-domain and commercial software titles.)

RAM Disk

With 2.125MB in my Apple IIGS, there's a maximum RAM disk size of 1,920K. The system will not auto-format a RAM disk larger than 1,888K in size. Selecting 1,920K from Control Panel won't auto-format.

- Each time you reset the computer to auto-format a RAM disk, the system freezes for 5 or more seconds.
- When a RAM disk is created, the system will erase the entire RAM disk after using Open-Apple Reset command a couple of times. (It seems to change the setting in the Control Panel to "Resize after reset: YES", thereby changing the setting by itself.)

Disk Access Slows Down

When loading up some GS-specific programs that use ProDOS 8 or ProDOS 16 as a launcher, the computer seems to have trouble loading ProDOS, and then trouble loading the main program system file. The program will take two to three times longer to start up than it will on a ROM 01-GS or other ROM 03-GS systems. It slows down so much that it appears the disk is damaged or corrupted. Some examples of programs that have this problem are "Diversi-Tune" and "Tunnel of Armageddon".

DISCUSSION -----

Most of these problems can be avoided. The ROMs (early and late) are identical. Some systems went out configured improperly. Anyway, I'll take them one at a time.

System Monitor

"LIST" is not a Monitor command. To list the contents of memory locations, you only need to type "l" or "L". When the monitor sees "LIST" it scrolls 20 lines of location contents and then sets the display to inverse. The monitor queues commands typed as a string; the second command in the string is "i"; the command for inverse. "S" and "T" are not Monitor commands and seem to confuse the system. Typing "l", a carriage return, "i" and a carriage return works fine. You should read the "Apple IIGS Firmware Reference" for a complete description of the Monitor and its commands.

Applesoft BASIC

Without an exact description of the steps required to create the problem described, we can only speculate as to the cause of the problem.

It sounds as if you are trying to run a ProDOS-16 application from ProDOS-8. Whatever the case, some memory locations are being stomped on, seriously scrambling memory, because the system thinks a disk has been switched. If this continues to be a problem, let us know exactly what you are doing to cause this crash, and we'll dig into it.

MDIdeas Card

The MDIdeas card was developed for the original Apple IIGS. The company is now out of business and has therefore not upgraded the product to work with the new ROMs. The card (or perhaps the accompanying software) is not compatible with the new version of the ROMs. Applied Engineering offers a comparable product that is compatible with the new ROMs.

Software

We will need concrete examples of the differences when software is run on two different systems, because the ROMs are identical. The problems exhibited here may be a result of a drive problem (discussed in the "slows down" section below).

RAM Disk

It sounds as if you are using the Classic Control Panel to modify the RAM disk. The Classic Control Panel is not aware of the memory requirements of GS/OS and will let the user set unreasonable RAM disk sizes. GS/OS will re-assign the value as it "takes" memory back at boot time. Using the Graphic Control Panel will eliminate this problem. This is not a bug, because the Classic Control Panel is necessary when using the system with ProDOS-8.

As a side note, pressing Open-Apple-Reset is not a very elegant way to re-start the system. We highly recommend the use of menu-bar selections over this method. Use Open-Apple-Reset only as a last-ditch effort.

Disk Access Slows Down

The slowdown your customer is experiencing could be a result of copy-protected software. If other Apple IIGS systems with the same ROMs (03) load the software more quickly, swap in a disk drive from one of the other systems. It's possible that the drive is in need of cleaning, and has troubles reading copy-protected disks.

Again, the ROMs you received are the same as the ROMs shipped in later systems.

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